

AS TO THIRD PARTIES.

The First One Appeared in American Politics in 1832.

HENRY CLAY WAS DEFEATED BY ONE.

Most of These Organizations Have Been Short Lived.

THEY HAVE CONTROLLED ELECTIONS.

The Last One, the Populist Party, May Hold the Balance of Power in the Next National Election.

New York, Dec. 29.—(Special.) In the fifty-fourth congress a third party will hold the balance of power in the senate of the United States for the first time in the history of American politics. It is not probable that the Populists will be able to secure much legislation along the lines of the national platform of the party, but an interesting chapter will be added to the history of third parties in this country.

A third party appeared in a national campaign for the first time in 1832 with candidates for president and vice president. Since that time there have been only three national elections—those of 1836, 1864, and 1868—in which there was no third party candidate for president. During that time ten separate and distinct third parties appeared in the field and several of them took part in two or more campaigns under different names each time, but advocating substantially the same principles. In only five elections did the candidates of any third party obtain any votes in the electoral college, but several times they succeeded in changing the course of history and in shaping political events.

In 1844 the liberty party defeated Henry Clay, the whig candidate, for president, although it did not secure a single electoral vote for its own candidate, James G. Birney, of New York. The vote for Birney in New York State in the election of 1844 was 15,812, drawn almost entirely from the whigs, which enabled Polk to carry the State by a small plurality and secure the electoral vote. In the electoral college Polk had 170 votes and Clay 135. If Clay had carried New York, the vote would have been Clay, 141; Polk, 134.

Four years later a third party again turned the scale in the national election, but that time they turned against the Democrats, and for the second time the result hinged on the vote of the State of New York. The free soil party nominated Martin Van Buren for president and Charles Francis Adams for vice president. At that time there was a strong anti-slavery element in the Democratic party in New York. They were known as "barn burners," but, in that campaign, they were allied with the free soil party and voted for Van Buren instead of Lewis Cass, the Democratic candidate. The result was that Taylor, the whig candidate, carried the State. Van Buren got 120,510 votes in the State, 6,000 more than Cass. The vote for Taylor was nearly 20,000 less than the combined vote of Cass and Van Buren.

In several campaigns third parties succeeded in dividing the old parties in various States, and they have always been able to inject a large amount of bitterness into political contests.

The First Third Party.

The first third party to enter a campaign was known as the anti-Masonic agitation following the disappearance and supposed murder of William Morgan, of Batavia, N. Y. Morgan was a Mason, and had threatened to publish a book revealing the secrets of the order.

One of the first results of the organizations of this third party was the calling of national conventions to nominate candidates for president and vice president. Up to that time candidates had been nominated by congressional caucus, by action of the State legislatures, or by common consent of the politicians and the people.

The anti-Masonic convention was held at Baltimore on the 26th

of September, 1831. William Wirt, the famous Virginia lawyer, who had twice been attorney general of the United States, was nominated for president and Amos Ellmaker, of Pennsylvania, for vice president. Then the two regular parties decided to call conventions and nominate candidates. The whig or national republican party, as it was then called, held its convention in December of the same year, and the Democratic convention was held in the same city in the following March. Platforms were adopted by the old parties in that campaign for the first time. The new party adopted no platform. Wirt, its candidate for president, carried the State of Vermont and received seven electoral votes.

The anti-Masonic party was short lived, and no other third party had been organized to take its place in the campaign of 1836.

The Liberty Party.

On November 13, 1838, the liberty party was organized at a convention that met at Warsaw, N. Y., and adopted the shortest political platform on record. This was the platform in full:

"Resolved, That in our judgment, every consideration of duty and expediency which ought to control the action of Christian free-men requires of the abolitionists of the United States to organize a distinct and independent political party, embracing all the necessary means for nominating candidates for office and sustaining them by public suffrage."

The convention then adjourned to meet in Albany April 1, 1840. At the adjourned meeting the convention nominated James G. Birney, for president and Francis Lemoyne, of Pennsylvania, for vice president. A political tidal wave swept the country that year electing Gen. William Henry Harrison president with a majority of 174 electoral votes. In the popular vote the candidates of the liberty party received only 7,059.

Four years later the party convention met at Buffalo and renominated Birney, who was then a resident of Michigan, for president, and Thomas Morris, of Ohio, for vice president. They adopted an anti-slavery bill. That year the total populist vote for Birney was 62,300, more than one-fourth of which were cast in New York State, where they turned the scale in favor of James K. Polk and made him president.

The Free Soilers.

In 1848 the liberty party had been succeeded by the free soil party, which held a national convention at Buffalo on August 9th and 10th and nominated Van Buren and Adams. They were supported by the abolitionists and the "barn burners," of this state, and polled enough votes to defeat Cass, the Democratic candidate for president, and elect Zachary Taylor. That year the popular vote for the candidate of the third party jumped up to a total of 291,263.

In the campaign of 1852 the free soil party nominated for president John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, and for vice president, George W. Julian, of Indiana. But that year the popular vote for their ticket dropped to 156,000 and Hale received no electoral votes.

The American or know-nothing party entered national politics for the first time in the campaign of 1856. It had existed as a party or faction in this state for fifteen years or more at the time and had elected a mayor in this city in 1844. It was called the American party until after the election of 1852 and its only platform at the time was "Americans must rule America." When it began to disintegrate as a party it was reorganized as an oath-bound secret society. Members were not fully informed of its purpose until they were put through a series of degrees accompanied by awe-inspiring ceremonies. Until they received the final degree they were instructed to answer all questions about the order with the words: "I know nothing about it!" That was the way the name of know-nothing party originated, and by that name it was known in the campaign of 1856.

The Know Nothings.

The know-nothing convention was held in Philadelphia in February. Millard Fillmore, of New York, was nominated for president and Andrew Jackson Donel-

son, of Tennessee, for vice president. The platform adopted was brief and the principles of the party were clearly stated in these two sentences:

"Americans must rule America, and to this end native born citizens should be selected for all state, federal and municipal government employment in preference to all others."

"Opposition to any union between church and state, no interference with religious faith or worship and no test oaths for office."

In the election the party carried only one state—Maryland—but polled the second largest vote ever cast for the candidates of a third party in a national election. The total vote for Fillmore was 874,584. This vote has only been exceeded by the vote cast for the Populist ticket in the election of 1892. Fillmore's percentage of the popular vote was much larger than the percentage for Weaver two years ago. The popular vote for Fillmore was more than 25 per cent of the total vote cast.

Out of the wreck of the know-nothing party and the remains of the Whig party a new third party was organized for the campaign of 1860. It was called the constitutional union party and announced that it had no platform except the constitution of the United States. Its candidate for president was John Bell, of Tenn., and he carried four Southern states, which gave him thirty-nine electoral votes, but his popular vote was 250,000 less than that of Douglass who had only twelve electoral votes.

Third parties then disappeared from national politics until 1872, when several of them entered the field, but only one, the Prohibition party, got its candidates for president and vice president to make the race. James Black, the Prohibition candidate, received only 5,608 votes.

And Then the Greenbackers.

The greenback party came into existence in 1876 and nominated Peter Cooper for president. He got 81,000 votes. In 1880 the greenback party was again in the field and James B. Weaver, its nominee for president, received more than 800,000 votes. Neal Dow made the race for the prohibitionists the same year, but received only a trifling vote.

The campaign of 1884 was prolific of new parties. The greenback party was still in existence and nominated B. F. Butler for president. The Prohibition party nominated John P. St. John, the American Prohibition party nominated Samuel C. Pomeroy and the equal rights party nominated Belva Ann Lockwood for president.

In the campaign of 1888 the union labor party appeared as the forerunner of the Populist party. A national convention was held in Cincinnati in May and Andrew J. Streator, of Illinois, was nominated for president. The convention was not harmonious and the Populist party was already in process of formation throughout the west and South, but in the election that year Streator received a popular vote of 146,836. The same year the popular vote for the Prohibition candidate took a big jump Clinton B. Fisk, their candidate for president, got 246,876 votes.

And Last of All.

The populist party entered the campaign of 1892 with James B. Weaver as its candidate for president, and in the light of the history of third parties it accomplished wonders. It polled the largest popular vote ever cast for the candidate of a third party, carried more states for Weaver than were carried for Bell in 1860 and had almost as many electoral votes as the latter. In addition it secured the governors and legislatures of several western states.

The Prohibition party has been in existence longer than any other third party, and is the only minor organization in the history of American politics that has held together for more than twenty years. It has nominated a straight ticket in six national campaigns and has polled a steadily increasing vote at each election.

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